

Central Coventry Fire District

Board of Directors

February 19, 2008 - 7:00 pm

Central Coventry Fire Station 4

Minutes

1. Call to Order – 7:02 pm

2. Roll Call

President: Girard Bouchard

**Anna Mae Lapinski - Linda Giguere - Ron Gizzarelli - Elaine Hunt -
Robert Crowe (8:07 pm)**

Clerk: Tracy Hall

Treasurer: Tom LaColle

Tax Collector – Jeanne Graemiger

Chief Seltzer – Asst Chief Tucker

**Additional People present: Lt. Dave Gorman, F/F Mike Stevens, F/F
Roland Tellier**

Not Present - VP Joe Bonn

**3. Approval of Minutes of the previous Board of Directors Meeting –
1/15/08**

Motion: Anna Mae Lapinski Seconded: Girard Bouchard

All Vote Aye

4. Old Business

Property Appraisal – Per Chief Seltzer the appraisal will be done shortly and will be available at the next meeting.

Administrative/Human Resources Assistant job description & benefit package

Chief Seltzer provided a revised copy of the job description and a copy of the benefit package. The job description had a couple of minor modifications to include comments from the last meeting. For the benefit package he followed the standard format of the Chiefs' contract and the Union contract. He compiled information from six fire departments around the state. Chief Seltzer quickly went through all of the sections. He also added that the duties of the District Clerk are not included. It is up to the Board how they want to handle that. Mr. Bouchard complimented the Chief on his efforts in putting the package together. Mrs. Hunt asked if there is a waiting period for the medical/dental coverage. Chief Seltzer replied that coverage would start on the 1st of the month following the hire date. Ms. Lapinski asked about co-pay for medical/dental coverage. Chief Seltzer replied that none of the current employees have a co-pay neither do any of the comparable jobs that he looked at. The package only allows for a single plan. The employee would pay the difference if they wanted a family plan. Mr. Gizzarelli asked about how the responsibility of the job measures up vs. the hourly rate. Chief Seltzer replied that the pay was on the lower end. Mr. Gizzarelli complimented the Chief saying

that the package is well thought out. He didn't find anything that he was opposed to. He feels that the wages are a little low but that can be revisited in the future. He also asked when the employee takes vacation how would that be handled. Chief Seltzer replied that the position would not be filled unless it was going to be long term and then he would come to the Board. The Chief also commented that the hourly figure of 15.50 came from budget discussions that were held last year in addition to the info he collected from other departments. Ms. Lapinski added that it is something that can be adjusted if needed. Chief Seltzer added that if the person were to opt out of the medical/dental coverage they would add approx \$4,000 to their salary thru the buy back. Mr. Bouchard said it was a good benefit package. Mr. Gizzarelli asked if there was an estimate of time required to be in the office vs. time that would be out of the office. Mr. Bouchard commented that currently Mrs. Hall does not spend 100% of her time in the office. Mrs. Hall agreed. She occasionally leaves the office for various reasons. Mr. Gizzarelli was concerned with travel time and use of a personal vehicle. Chief Seltzer replied that currently the Asst Chief does a mail run every day and we do have a run around vehicle that would be available to the employee. Mr. Gizzarelli suggested making an agreement for compensation should the employee have to use their personal vehicle. Chief Seltzer replied that would be no need as the department has vehicles that could be used. The employee would not need to use their personal vehicle.

Mr. Gizzarelli made a motion to accept the job description and benefit

package as submitted with the understanding that it can be revisited at any time for fine tuning if necessary.

Motion: Ron Gizzarelli Seconded: Linda Giguere

All Vote Aye

Mr. Bouchard asked Chief Seltzer if and when would want to advertise for the position. Chief Seltzer replied that it was up to the Board. Mrs. Hunt asked if there was any legal reason for advertising rather than hiring the person who is doing the job now. Mrs. Lapinski responded that we are creating a new position and we have a responsibility to the taxpayers to do our due diligence. The position has changed to a full time position it is appropriate to open it up. Mrs. Hunt asked if we have someone competent already doing these duties why are we spending money and time to advertise and interview. Do we really need to do that? Mr. Bouchard replied that he was not aware of a law that required it but that it was necessary to avoid the appearance of any kind of favoritism. Mrs. Lapinski commented that she was sure Mrs. Hall would be our first applicant. Mr. Gizzarelli asked, since he is a new member and doesn't know, have there been any other instances where a position was not advertised? Mr. Bouchard replied that he was not aware of any. Mrs. Hunt and Mr. Gizzarelli commented that as they were unaware of the history up to this point how did people end up with their positions thru the merge. Mr. Bouchard replied that there were people in each district doing the same jobs. All people were asked if they would like to continue in their positions. We had very interesting campaigns for

the Treasurer's position. There were two well qualified candidates and it was a difficult decision. It was not limited to only those two candidates anyone was allowed to put in for the position. Tax Collectors were asked and Mrs. Graemiger was the only one who wanted to remain as Tax Collector. Mrs. Hunt asked were these positions recommendations to the Board and the Board approved them? Mr. Bouchard replied that was correct. Mrs. Hunt asked if this was going to be the same for this new position. Mr. Bouchard said yes. The Chief will set up an application, interview and selection process then present his recommendation to the Board. Mr. Gizzarelli felt there should be some advantage for Mrs. Hall for staying with the district and taking the part time position. Mr. Bouchard commented that Mrs. Hall does have other employment and at the time the current situation worked out well for both Mrs. Hall and the Board. Mr. Gizzarelli had one last question. Can the Board reject the candidate recommended by the Chief? Mr. Bouchard replied that they could. Mr. Gizzarelli added that he feels the qualifications of a candidate are very important and if a person has been working for us that they should get some extra points or consideration. The Chief added that Mrs. Hall will have some qualifications that other candidates don't have because of her department experience. He also added that during the interview process a Board member usually sits in. F/F Tellier asked to comment. His comment was that in trying get away from nepotism his wife had been asked to leave the Tiogue Board so he felt that there should defiantly be an application process to avoid that issue. Mr. Gizzarelli commented that in RI everybody

knows somebody so you really need to look at qualifications. Mr. Bouchard recommended setting a target hire date then fit the advertising process to that date. The Chief is looking to get someone into the position as soon as we can. Mr. Bouchard recommends April 1st as a target hire date. Chief Seltzer had spoken to the Treasurer regarding the funds available and April may be a little early. They were looking at the last three months of the fiscal year. We may be able to do it sooner than June but we'll have to wait and see. Mr. LaColle pointed out that the position was put in the budget as a part time position, not to say that the funds will not be available, they just were not budgeted. He also added that as always it's hard to say at this time in the fiscal year what will be under or over spent and what contingent funds will come in. Chief Seltzer added that we have some significant projects coming in to town that will generate some significant plan review fees. These monies have some obligated use and one of the uses for this money is administration. In the next couple months we have in excess of \$20,000 to \$30,000 coming in. Mr. Bouchard amends his motion to a target date of June 1, 2008.

Motion: Girard Bouchard Seconded: Linda Giguere

All Vote Aye

5. President's Report

President's Report is very short as he was away on vacation. There was no merger meeting with the Coventry Fire District. Chief Seltzer will go into more detail regarding the reasons for postponing the

meeting in his report.

Motion: Anna Mae Lapinski Seconded: Elaine Hunt

All Vote Aye

6. Chief's Report

Chief Seltzer presented his report. In regards to the Swearing In of the new Firefighters, Chief Seltzer wants to move that into May as there will be new Lieutenants and a Fire Marshal to be sworn in as well. Under Fire Station Design Committee the Chief added that it is definite that the Senior Center on Wood St. is moving to the Town Hall Annex. They have received some Federal funding to accomplish this. On the financial side in addition to the legislation regarding a maximum tax levy, there is also talk of reducing or eliminating the Motor Vehicle tax reimbursement. Right now it is aimed at cities & towns but we will keep an eye on it.

Mrs. Hunt asked about putting a station at the Wood St. location how would that impact the bus traffic and the ball field. Chief Seltzer replied that currently we are looking at the front Building. If Laidlaw and School Maintenance Dept move we could use that area for Training. It all depends on what else is going on. The town is open to working with us on many different options. As far as traffic to the ball field that would be on the opposite side of the building from the apparatus. Mr. Gizzarelli commented that the Chief's report is always

comprehensive and requested that in the future questions be allowed after each section of the Chief's report rather than waiting until the end. Mr. Gizzarelli is concerned with public reaction to the moving of this station to Wood St. because of the additional response time. Chief Seltzer replied that the move would add 45 seconds to the response time. Also he is looking into the Opticon Traffic System that would change the traffic lights in the direction the fire trucks were going. Mr. Gizzarelli feels that the Board and/or the public should be involved. Mr. Bouchard replied that the committee is going to bring a recommendation to the Board also the current item before the Board is the Chief's Report. Chief Seltzer replied that the committee has made no decisions nor made any presentation to the Board. This is just a status report. Also there are going to be some rough financial times ahead and this move may represent a significant saving in operations costs. Also this was something that came up unexpectedly, but it is an opportunity we need to take a hard look at. Ultimately the decision may be that this is not the right way to go. We don't know yet. Mr. Crowe commented about Tiogue being closed at night before the Merge. Even if Station 4 were to be relocated to Wood St. it would still be better than before the merge. Mr. Bouchard feels that if the studies show this is a good idea the consolidation of the two stations would be financially positive for us. 45 seconds can seem like an eternity to some people. Ms. Lapinski commented that the committee is only a fact finding committee right now and people need to realize that nothing is forever. Chief Seltzer commented that we are far from the end result and there is much

more research to do.

Mr. Gizzarelli read the article in the Kent County Times and agreed it was well done. He also asked if we could make the extra effort to get the info about when our meetings are held out to the public. Maybe we can get our board meeting listed in the Kent County Times with the other Town meetings. Mr. Bouchard feels that the public is well informed of our financial decision thru the annual meeting which this year was a record of 28 minutes. Meetings are posted on the Secretary of State's website and it has been noted in previous articles as to when we meet. The Clerk will contact KC Times and see if we can have our meetings listed with the other town meetings.

Motion: Elaine Hunt Seconded: Linda Giguere

All Vote Aye

Board Members agreed that the Tuesday, March 11, 2008 was the best date to have the Work Session for the new members.

7. Treasurer's Report

Mr. LaColle presented his report. Chief Seltzer added that we are on track with ½ the year gone we have spent about ½ of the budget.

Motion: Ron Gizzarelli Seconded: Elaine Hunt

All Vote Aye

8. Tax Collector's Report

Mrs. Graemiger presented her report.

Motion: Elaine Hunt Seconded: Robert Crowe

All Vote Aye

Mrs. Graemiger has an account for Woodland Manor who had changed their address and now don't want to pay interest because they did not receive their bill. Mr. Bouchard confirmed that not receiving the bill is not a valid reason for late payment. The Clerk will send a form letter to that effect.

The second issue Mrs. Graemiger had another taxpayer with was a question about a veteran's exemption. This issue has also been determined previously. The Clerk will send a letter to this taxpayer also.

There was some discussion regarding the State laws regarding the sending of tax bills and the charging of interest.

9. New Business

Mrs. Giguere asked about when the website will be up again. Chief Seltzer replied that it is being worked on he expected it to be done by now and hopes it will be up soon.

Mr. Gizzarelli had a suggestion in a public information vein in addition to a website; the letterhead could be modified to include the names of staff and board members. This would allow the public to see who is doing the work.

10. Introduction of new business to be considered at the next Board

Meeting

11. Good & Welfare

Mr. Bouchard read Thank You notes from the family of Agnes Ball, 'Tis the Season and the David Najarian Scholarship Road Race.

There was some discussion regarding flooding that occurs on Johnson's Blvd, Little Lake Tiogue and Twin Lakes Ave.

12. Adjournment – 8:52 pm

Motion: Elaine Hunt Seconded: Anna Mae Lapinski

All Vote Aye